



Engaging & challenging the gifted English student



Karen Yager Knox Grammar School

Approach

A hand is shown from the wrist up, holding a bright, glowing blue stream of light or energy that rises vertically into the dark background. The hand is wearing a dark, patterned bracelet. The overall image has a dark, moody aesthetic with a strong blue light source.

- Conceptual programming designed around skills and knowledge leading to understanding
- Questions
- Student choice: Texts, home-learning, pace and assessment tasks
- Challenges beyond school

- *'Students internalise the belief teachers have about their ability; they rise and fall to the level of expectation. When teachers believe in students, students believe in themselves'* (Raffini, 1993).
- *'Teachers expectations for students – whether high or low – can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, students tend to give to teachers as much or as little as teachers expect of them'* (Lumsden 1991).

Csikszentmihalyi: *Flow and Creativity*

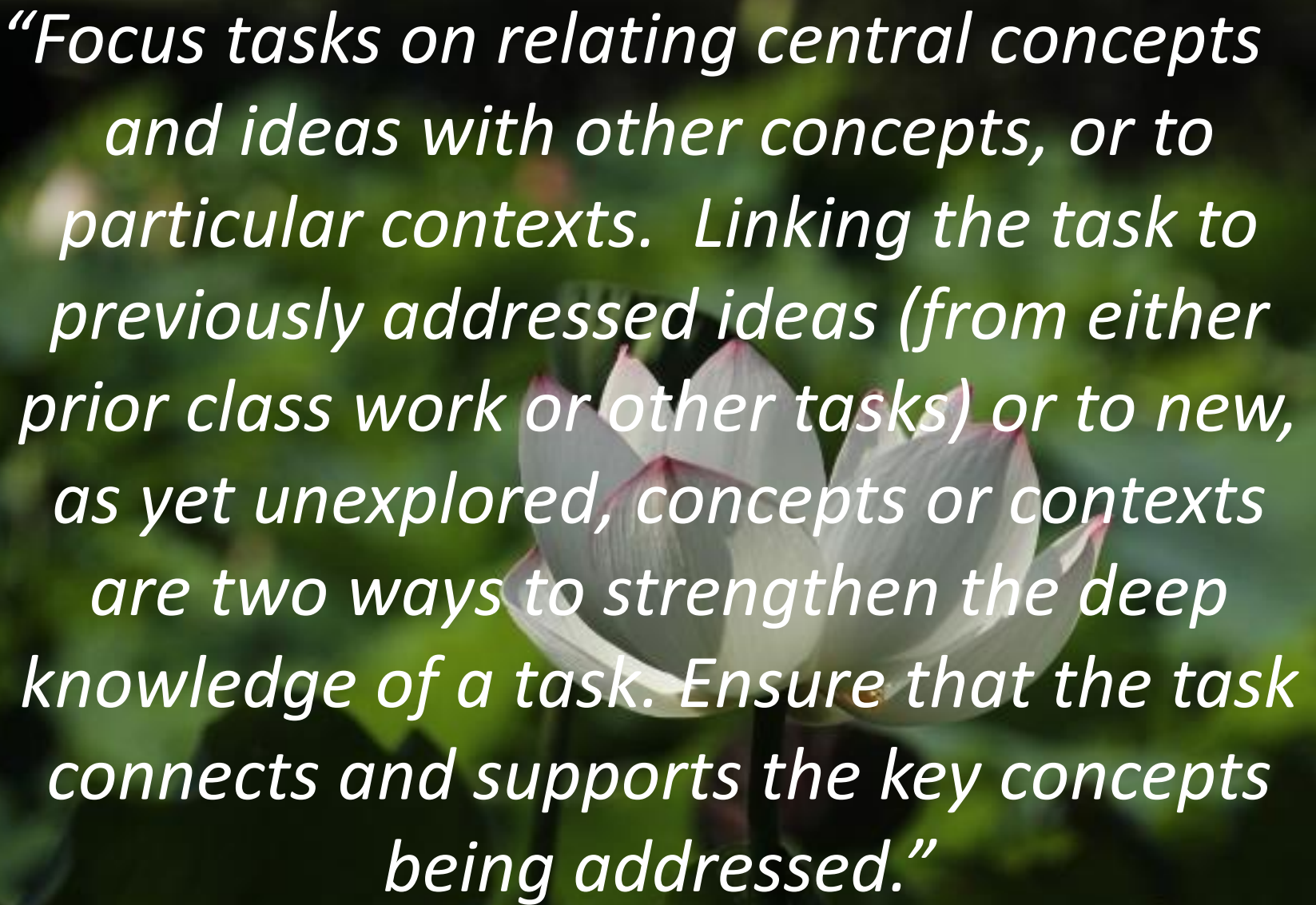
- Curiosity is ignited!
- There are clear goals every step of the way
- The essential skills and knowledge have been taught
- There is a balance between challenges and skills
- There is immediate feedback to one's actions
- There is no worry of failure
- The activity becomes autotelic - experience flow!

Focus on learning

- What do my students need to learn?
- Why does it matter?
- What do they already know?
- How will they demonstrate learning?
- How will they get there?
- How well do I expect them to do it?



Conceptual programming

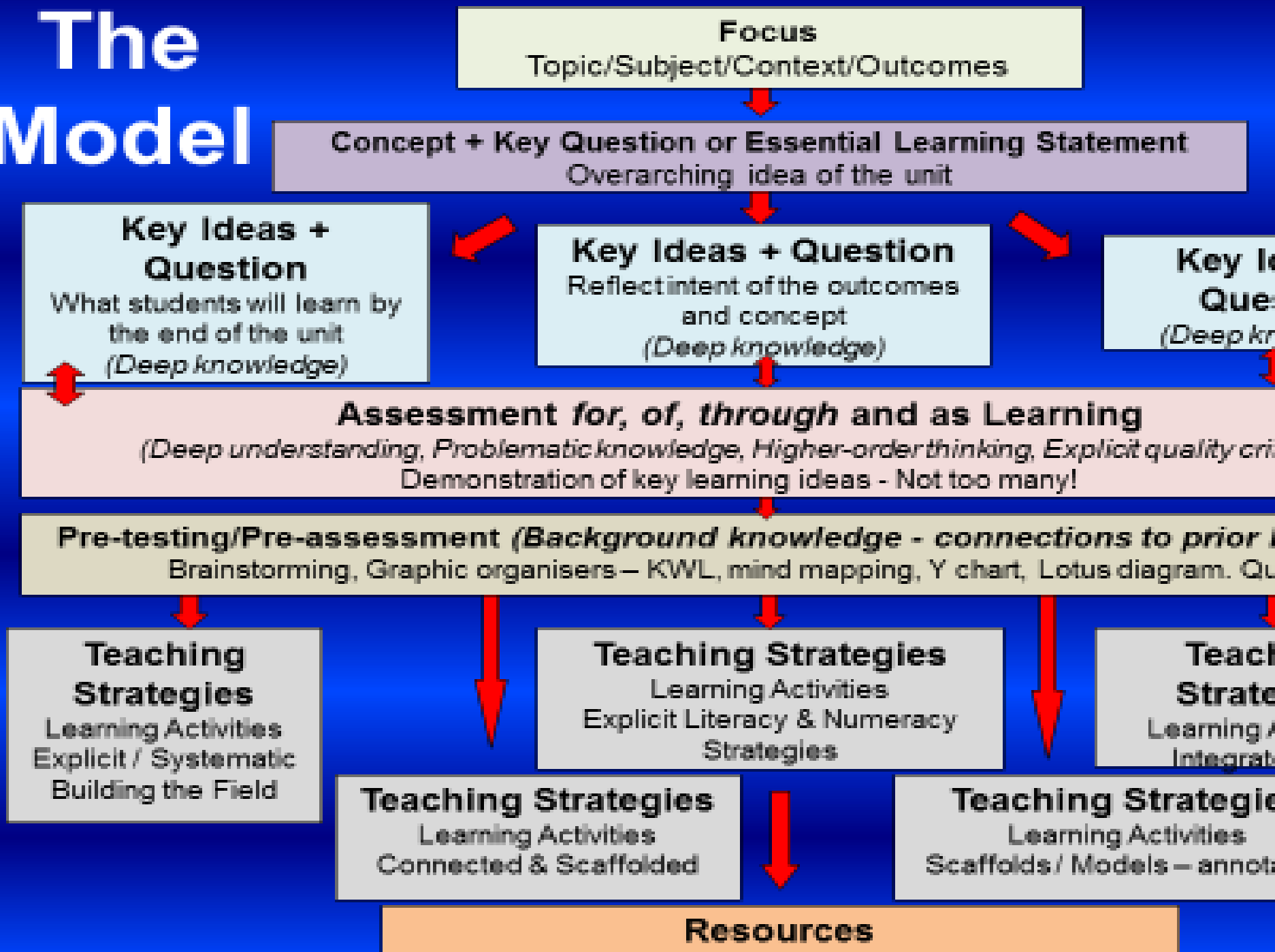


“Focus tasks on relating central concepts and ideas with other concepts, or to particular contexts. Linking the task to previously addressed ideas (from either prior class work or other tasks) or to new, as yet unexplored, concepts or contexts are two ways to strengthen the deep knowledge of a task. Ensure that the task connects and supports the key concepts being addressed.”

-QT Framework

Quality Teaching Model	Kaplan et al 2006	Maker
“Intellectual work that is challenging, centred on significant concepts and ideas, and requires substantial cognitive and academic engagement with deep knowledge ”	Core: Curriculum addresses the core concepts, principles, and skills of a discipline	Content: Concepts & ideas that are complex and abstract
Knowledge integration, Problematic knowledge, Higher-order thinking, Background knowledge, Substantive communication	Connections: connect overarching concepts, principles, and skills within and across disciplines , time periods, cultures, places, and/or events	Process: Higher-order thinking skills, self-directed learning
Significance – Connectedness Problematic knowledge Deep understanding	Practice: The applications of facts, concepts , principles, skills, and methods in an authentic manner & context	Product: authentic tasks connected to the real world; evaluation; transformation; Synthesis
Quality learning environment, Student direction	Identity: Developing students’ interests and expertise, strengths, values, and character	Learning environment: student centred

The Model

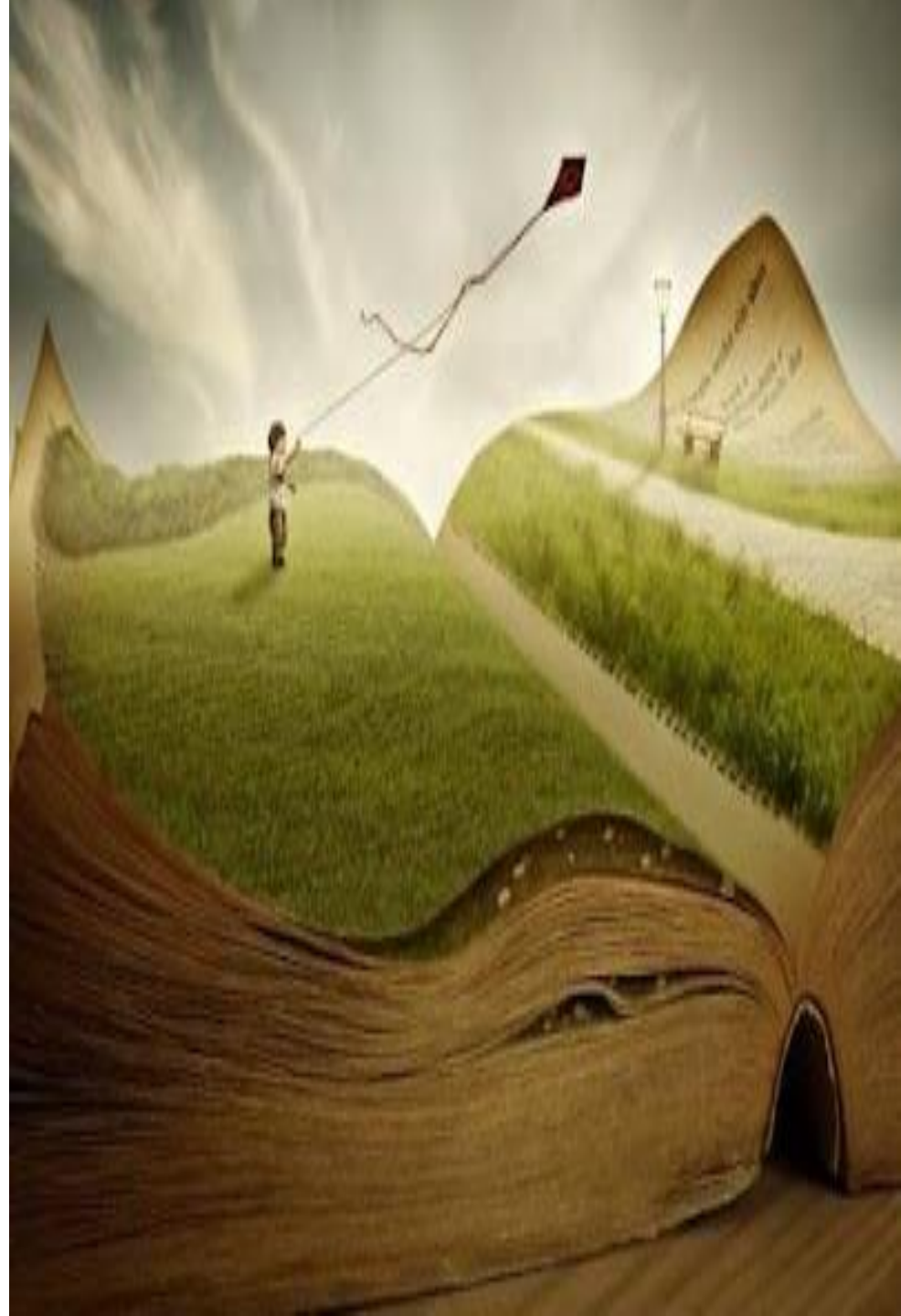


Plan the learning

- **Stage 1: Identify learning intentions** - what is the key knowledge and understanding you hope your students will have at the end of the teaching sequence?
- **Stage 2: Evidence of learning** - how will you know what the students know and understand? What questions and tasks will provide evidence of that learning, and also provide information about those students whose learning is not yet complete? What are the criteria for success?
- **Stage 3: Developing learning activities** - what instructional activities will enable as many students as possible to complete the questions and tasks successfully?

Big Ideas

- Identify what is known
- Explicit teaching of skills
- Conceptual programming uncovering the learning
- Visible learning
- Space for thinking and creativity
- Challenging and provocative tasks for home-learning
- Rich and extensive resources





Plan the learning

“The first thing that teachers will need to do is select and organise the essential knowledge, understandings, skills and values from the syllabus around central concepts or ideas...”

Quality teaching in NSW Public Schools

Plan the learning

- Holistic and conceptual programming embedded in syllabus content, knowledge and skills focused on deep knowledge and deep understanding
- Distillation from syllabus to the concept to key learning ideas to assessment to explicit teaching and learning strategies
- Integrated assessment *of, for, through* and *as* learning – *backward mapping*
- Explicit teaching strategies informed by ongoing data
- Technology for learning

Plan the learning

“Without designing around provocative questions and big ideas, teaching easily succumbs into an activity - or coverage - orientation without clear priorities.”

Understanding by Design

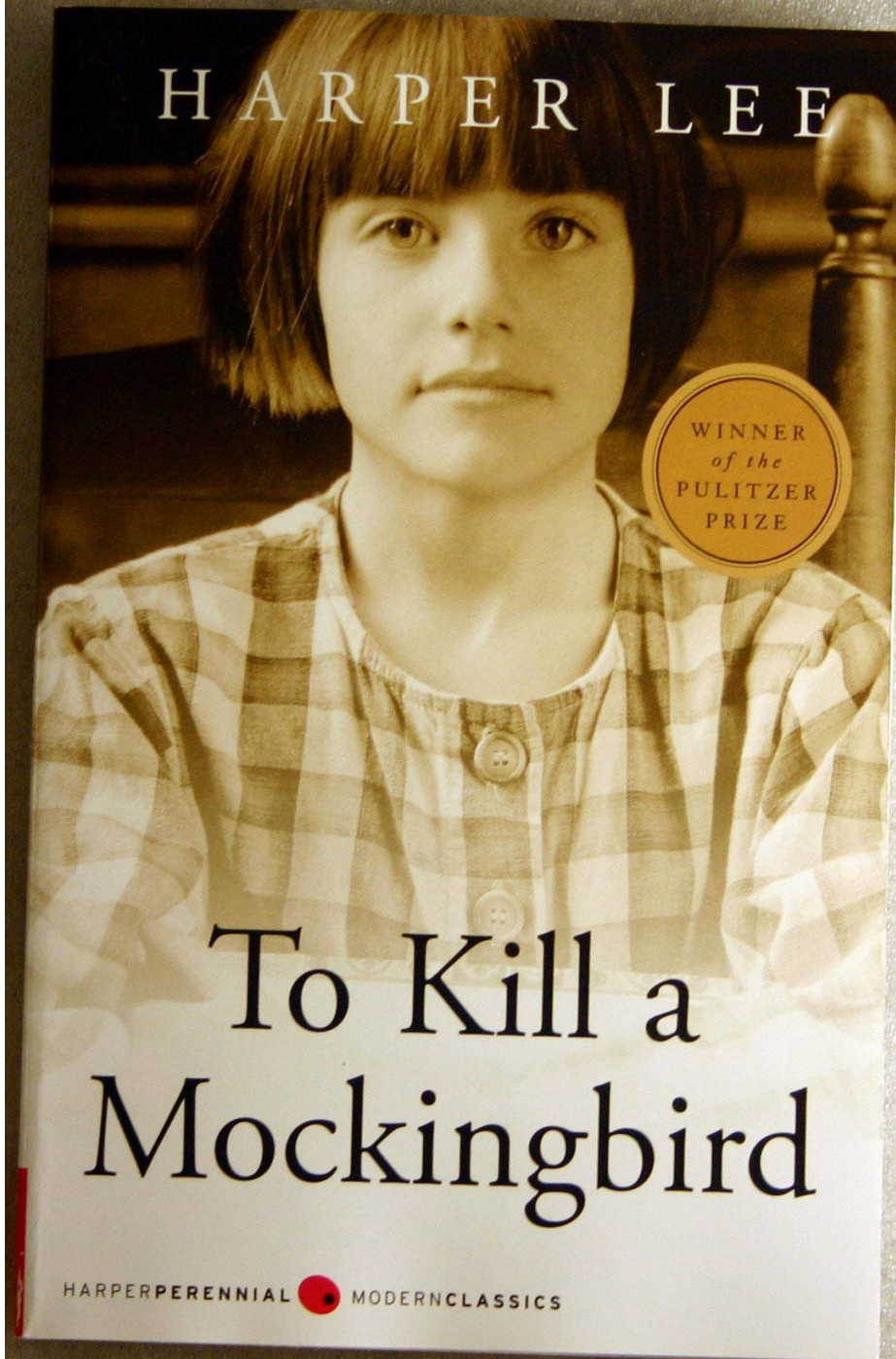
McTighe and Wiggins ASCD 1999

Plan the learning

- *‘Teachers who assess for learning use day-to-day classroom assessment activities to involve students directly and deeply in their own learning, increasing their confidence and motivation to learn by emphasizing progress and achievement rather than failure and defeat’ (Stiggins, 1999; 2001).*
- A classroom culture of transparency, strategic questioning by teachers and students, and an understanding of what is quality.

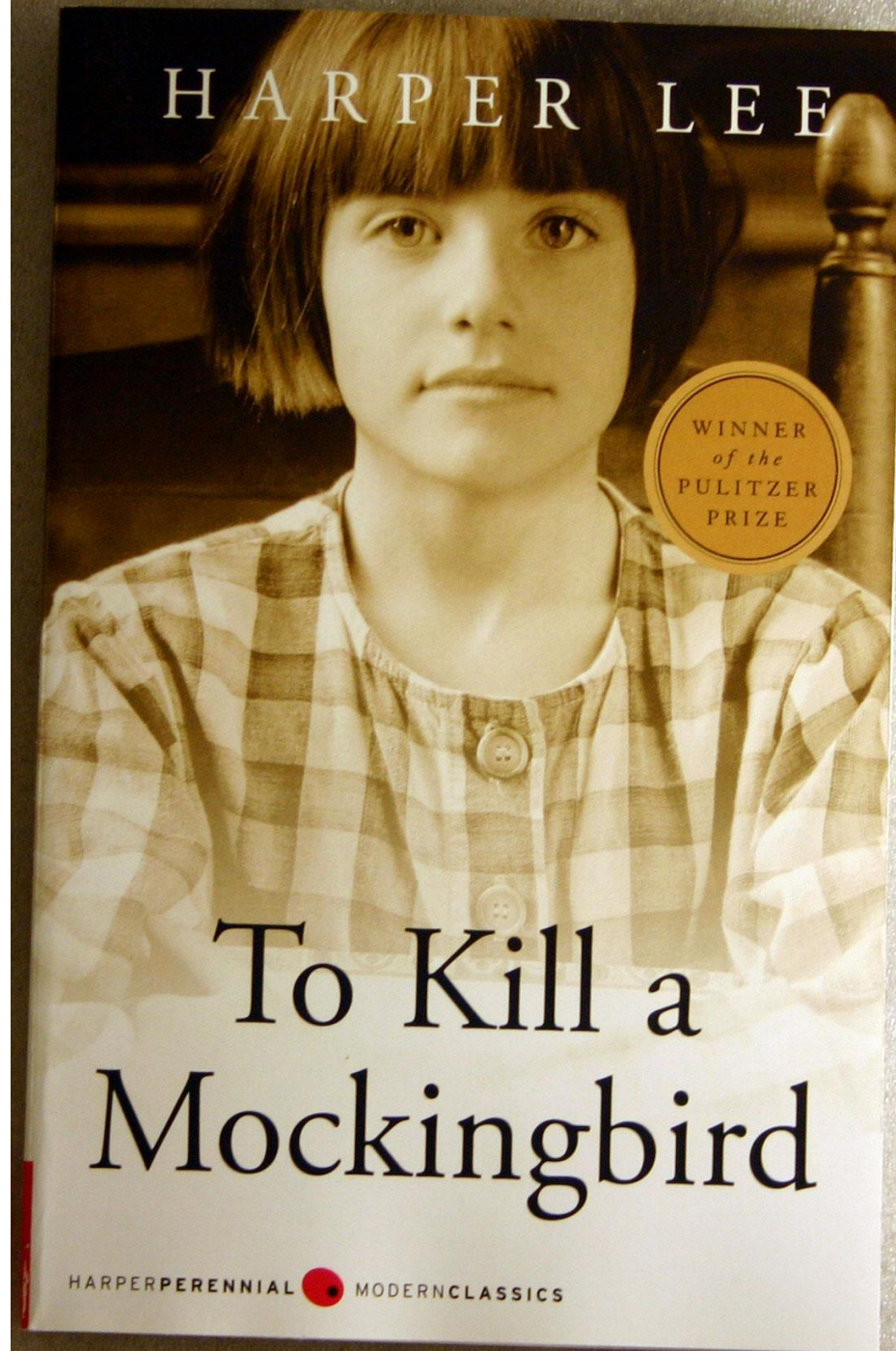
Uncovering the Learning

- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Why did it win the Pulitzer?
- Why do English faculties continue to have students study this novel?



Uncovering the Learning

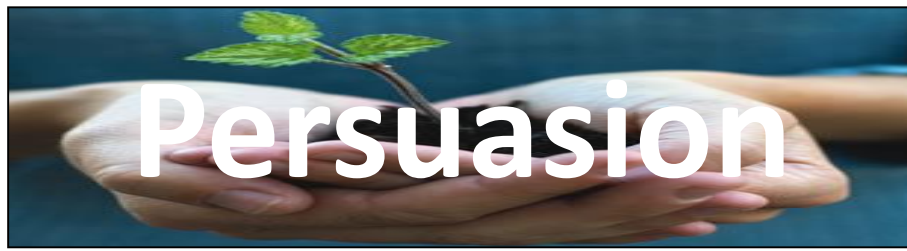
- Narrative Voice
- Characterisation
- Contextualisation
- Representation of Prejudice
- Textuality
- Ethics



Contextualisation

- **Contextualisation:** How anime reflects and challenges its culture and context.
- **Key learning ideas:**
 - How cultural context shapes perspectives and ideas.
 - How meaning is represented through film techniques and animation.
- **Outcomes:** 2A, 5C & 8D





- **Question:** Why does “Everybody Needs a Little Controversy”?
- **Key Ideas**
 - How texts reflect and challenge key environmental concerns
 - The power of language and music to persuade and position others
- **Assessment Task 1:** Original Protest Poem or Song re sustainability and a Critical Reflection
- **Outcomes:** 1A, 3B, 5C & 7D





Resources

- *Empty* – Suzanne Weyne
- ‘There will come soft rains’ – Sara Teasdale (poem) and YouTube clip - Ray Bradbury
- *Something Beautiful* - Sharon Dennis Wyeth
- ‘Saltwater Tears’ – Julian Lennon
- ‘Song of the Redwood Tree’ – Walt Whitman
- ‘Species Deceases’ - Midnight Oil
- ‘Be the Rain’ – Neil Young
- ‘Big Yellow Taxi’ – Joni Mitchell
- ‘Mercy Mercy Me’ – Marvin Gaye
- ‘Black Waters’ - Jean Ritchie
- ‘Flames and Dangling Wire’ – Robert Gray

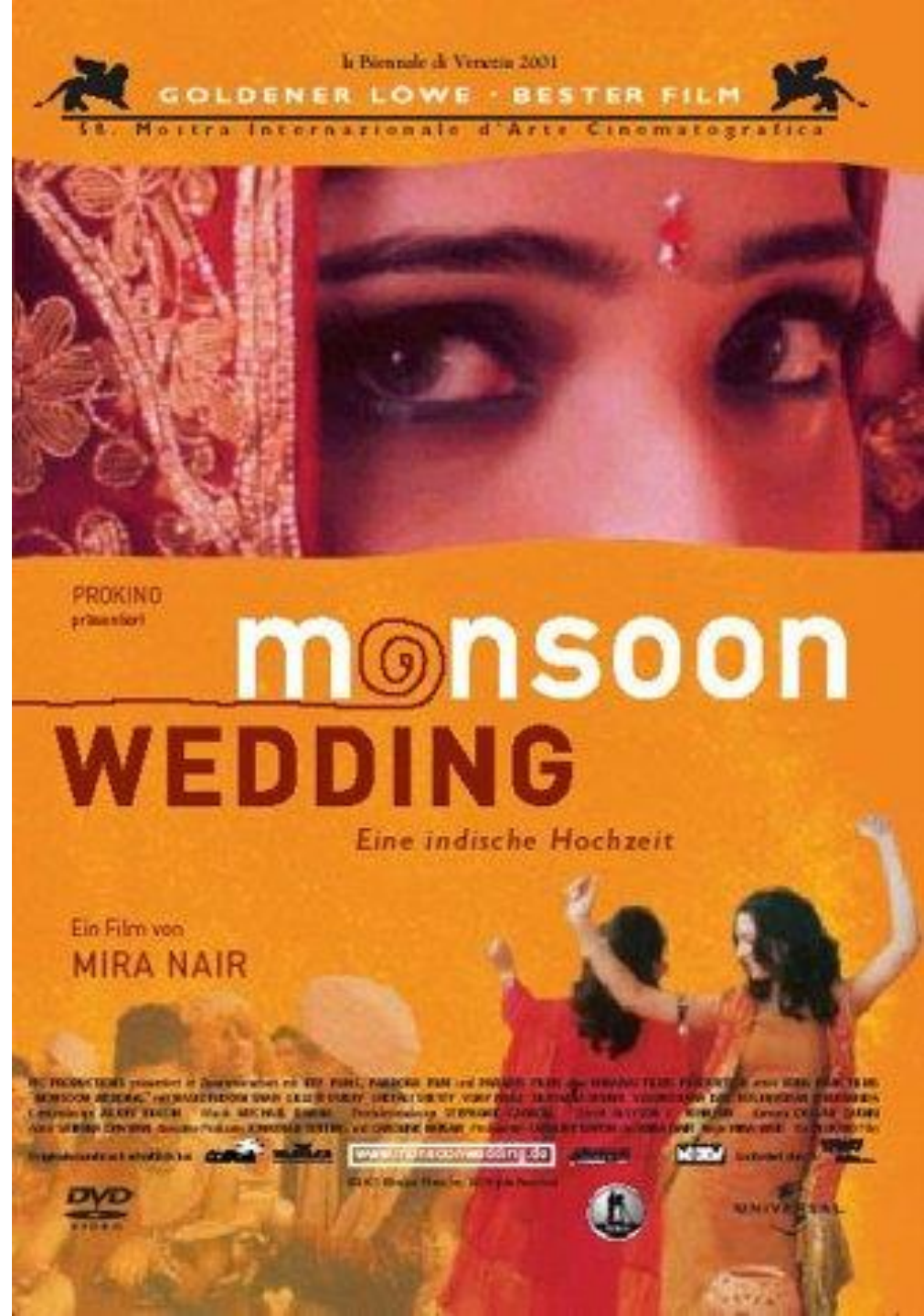
Through My Window

- **Concept:** Perspectives
- **Question:** How do the ways we perceive ourselves, others and the world influence the meaning of texts?
- **Key Ideas**
 - How our personal and cultural context shapes our perspective and how we respond to texts
 - How our perspective shapes the way we make language choices and create texts
 - The power and beauty of language to explore and express views of ourselves, others and the world
- **Outcomes:** 1A, 7D, 8D



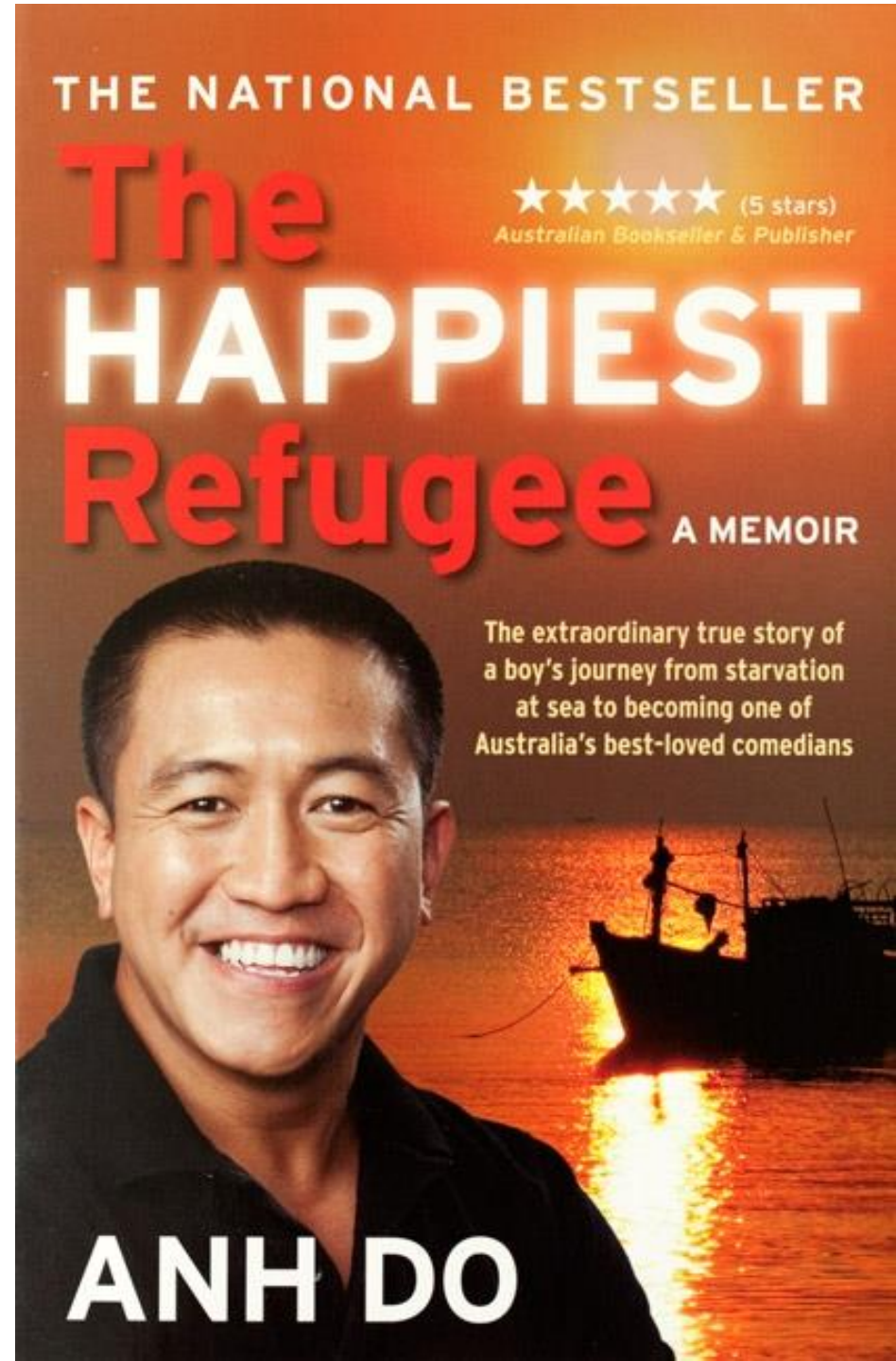
Hybridity

- **Concept:** Hybridity
- **Key Question:** Are genres constant or are they fluid and dynamic, morphing to suit the times?
- **Key Learning Ideas:**
 - Genre theory: conventions, sub-genres and hybridity
 - How filmic features and details shape and convey meaning
 - How texts can explore universal themes & social reality, and reflect different values and attitudes
- **Outcomes:** 5C, 6C, 7D & 8D



Voice

- **Concept:** Voice
- **Key Learning Ideas:**
 - How voice is crafted in a text through language features
 - How the voices reflect the perceptions, context and assumptions of their composers
- **Texts:**
 - *The Happiest Refugee*
 - *The Rainbow Troops*
 - *To Kill a Mocking Bird*
- **Outcomes:** 1A, 2A, 3B & 7D





- **Concept:** Place and context play a fundamental role in the lives of human beings, it is the nexus of existence and influences who we are and how we see the world and others.
- **Key Question:** How do place and context shape and reflect our cultural identity?
- **Key Learning Ideas:**
 - How texts reflect their place and times
 - How an individual's cultural identity reflects and is shaped by places How language and form captures and conveys place
- **Outcomes:** 3B, 5C, 7D & 8D



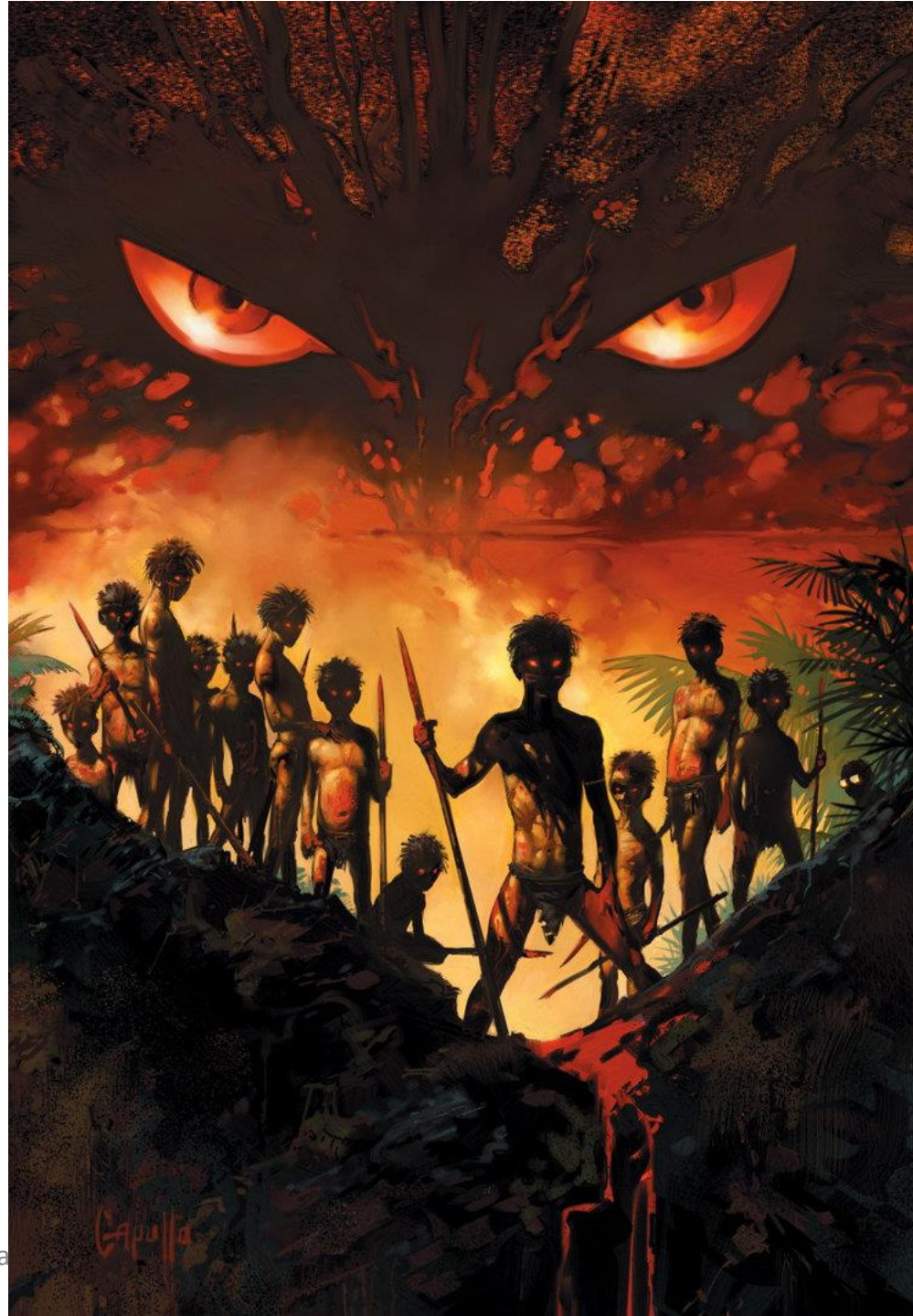
Ethics

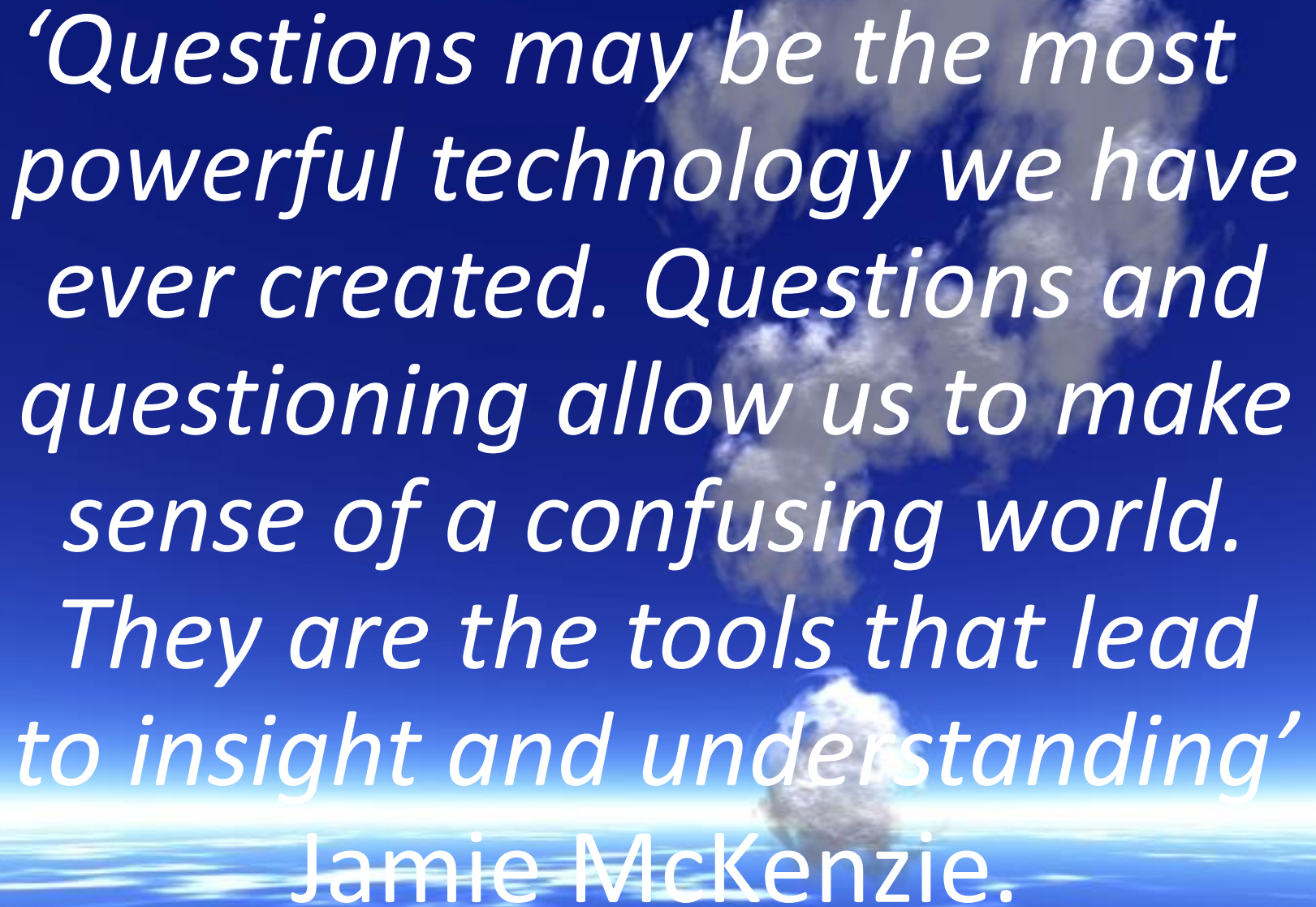
- **Concept:** The power of language to explore and express the ethical and moral dimensions of human experiences.
- **Key question:** Do texts have the power to challenge us ethically and morally?
- **Key learning ideas:**
 - How and why texts reflect and challenge the ethical and moral codes of their times.
 - How language, form and structure provoke thought about ethical and moral issues.
- **Outcomes:** 2A, 5C, 7D



Resources

- *To Kill a Mocking Bird*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Maus*
- Pope's – 'An essay on Man'
- *Jasper Jones*
- *Macbeth*
- *Merchant of Venice*
- *Animal Farm*
- *Stand and Deliver*
- *Edward Scissorhands*
- *The Lord of the Rings*
- <http://www.teachwithmovies.org/ethical-emphasis-index.htm>



The background of the image is a vibrant blue sky filled with soft, white, wispy clouds. A bright, glowing light source, likely the sun or moon, is positioned on the horizon line, creating a lens flare effect and illuminating the clouds from below. The overall atmosphere is serene and inspirational.

‘Questions may be the most powerful technology we have ever created. Questions and questioning allow us to make sense of a confusing world. They are the tools that lead to insight and understanding’
Jamie McKenzie.

Design

- *“Teaching is the art of asking questions” Socrates.*
- Questions are not just devices to evaluate specifics of learning but a means of actively **promoting conceptual thinking, deepening learning and understanding.**
- Questions can be more powerful than answers.
- Teaching is about designing the learning environment



ASK

TO LEARN, LEARN TO ASK

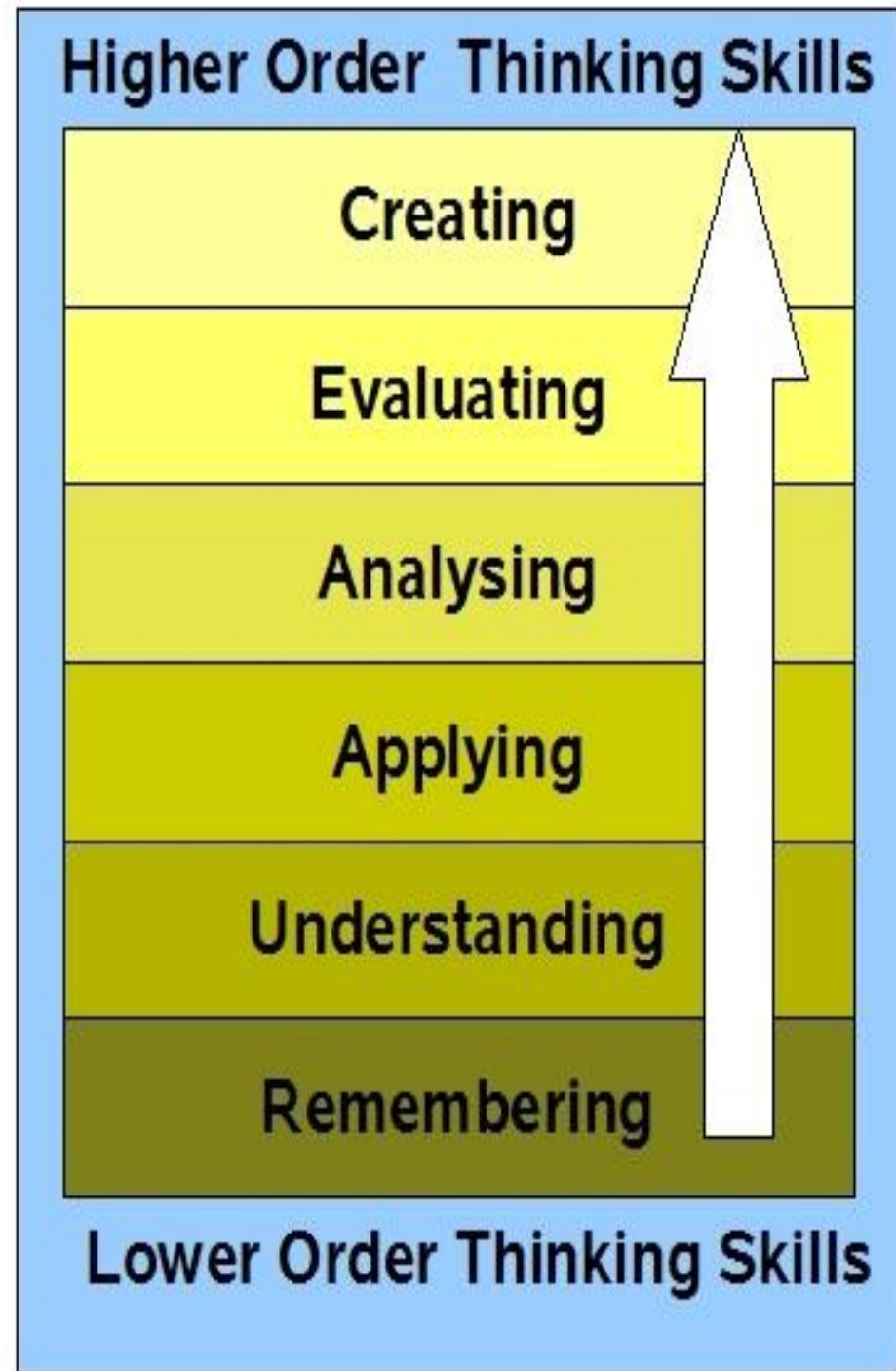


Highly Effective Questions

- Simplicity and clarity
- Thought provoking
- Generate curiosity and engagement
- Channel attention and focuses inquiry
- Stimulate reflective thinking and conversation
- Surface and challenge assumptions
- Invite creativity and new possibilities
- Connect to a deeper meaning and understanding
- Evoke more questions

Bloom's Model

- **C:** What if...? & Can you see other possibilities?
- **E:** Is there a better solution?
- **AN:** How was the setting represented?
- **AP:** Could you apply this approach to...?
- **U:** Who is the main character?
- **R:** Can you name the...?



S.C.A.M.P.E.R

- **S:** What if I change or swap this?
- **C:** What can I blend or combine?
- **A:** What could I substitute?
- **M:** What will happen if I add...?
- **P:** How could I use this somewhere else?
- **E:** What happens when I remove...?
- **R:** What if I did this the other way?

Substitute something

Combine it with something else

Adapt something to it

Modify or Magnify it

Put it to some other use

Eliminate something

Reverse or Rearrange it

Williams' Model - Extending

- **Paradox:** Paradoxes can be used to evaluate ideas and challenge pupils to reason and find proof.
- **Analogy:** Pupils find the similarities between things and compare one thing to another.
- **Discrepancy:** Pupils should be challenged to discuss what is not known or understood.
- **Provocative questions:** These are questions that require thoughtful consideration to clarify meaning or develop new knowledge.
- **Organised Random Search:** Given a situation or body of knowledge, pupils search for other information to answer questions such as, what would you do or what would you have done?
- **Tolerance for Ambiguity:** Open-ended questions
- **Intuitive Expression:** Empathy questions
- **Evaluative Situations:** Evaluate solutions and answers in terms of their consequences and implications — pose the question what if?
- **Visualisation Skills:** Provide opportunities for pupils to perceive or visualise themselves in many contexts.

Socratic Questioning

Questions that Probe Reasons and Evidence		
Questions of Clarification	Questions that Probe Assumptions	Questions that Probe Reasons and Evidence
What do you mean by ____? How does this relate to our problem, discussion and/or issue?	What are you assuming? Why would someone make that assumption?	What would be an example? How do you know?
Questions about Viewpoints or Perspectives	Questions that Probe Implications and Consequences	Questions about the Question
What effect would that have? What is an alternative?	How can we find out? How could someone settle this question?	What bigger issue is the question trying to get you to think about and/or investigate?

Langford's 5 Whys

- Ask a question
- This leads to a second question
- Ask three more questions
- Probes and deepens understanding
- Thwarts superficial responses



Flip Learning

- Provide the content and resources
- Students generate the questions
- *'If children aren't asking questions, they're being spoon-fed. That might be effective in terms of getting results, but it won't turn out curious, flexible learners suited to the 21st century'* Guy Claxton.



A lit candle with a bright flame against a dark background. The flame is a vibrant yellow-orange, and the candle itself is a warm, golden-brown color. The background is a deep, dark brown, creating a strong contrast with the light from the candle.

Student Choice

“Finnish culture values intrinsic motivation and the pursuit of personal interest” (Amy Choi, TED talk 2015)

Student choice

- Enabling our students to have a choice in what they learn and how they demonstrate the learning.
- *'validating and authorising them to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge and experiences throughout education in order to improve our schools'* (Fletcher 2005).





Assessment

Assessment programs should invite students to:

- Have choice
- Research, generate and evaluate knowledge
- Connect and synthesise concepts and ideas
- Seek possibilities
- Consider alternatives
- Solve problems
- Use reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and creativity

What do they already know?

- Unless new knowledge becomes integrated with the learner's prior knowledge and understanding, this new knowledge remains isolated, cannot be used effectively in new tasks, and does not transfer readily to new situations.



"I'm going to Grandma's house to show her how to check her e-mail again for the ten millionth time.
If you don't bite her, I will!"

Deep learning: Identification of concept, skills, knowledge and understanding to be assessed



Essential learning goal & key learning ideas



Precision: Data & pre-assessment



Targeted assessment

Formative (A4L & AasL)



Summative



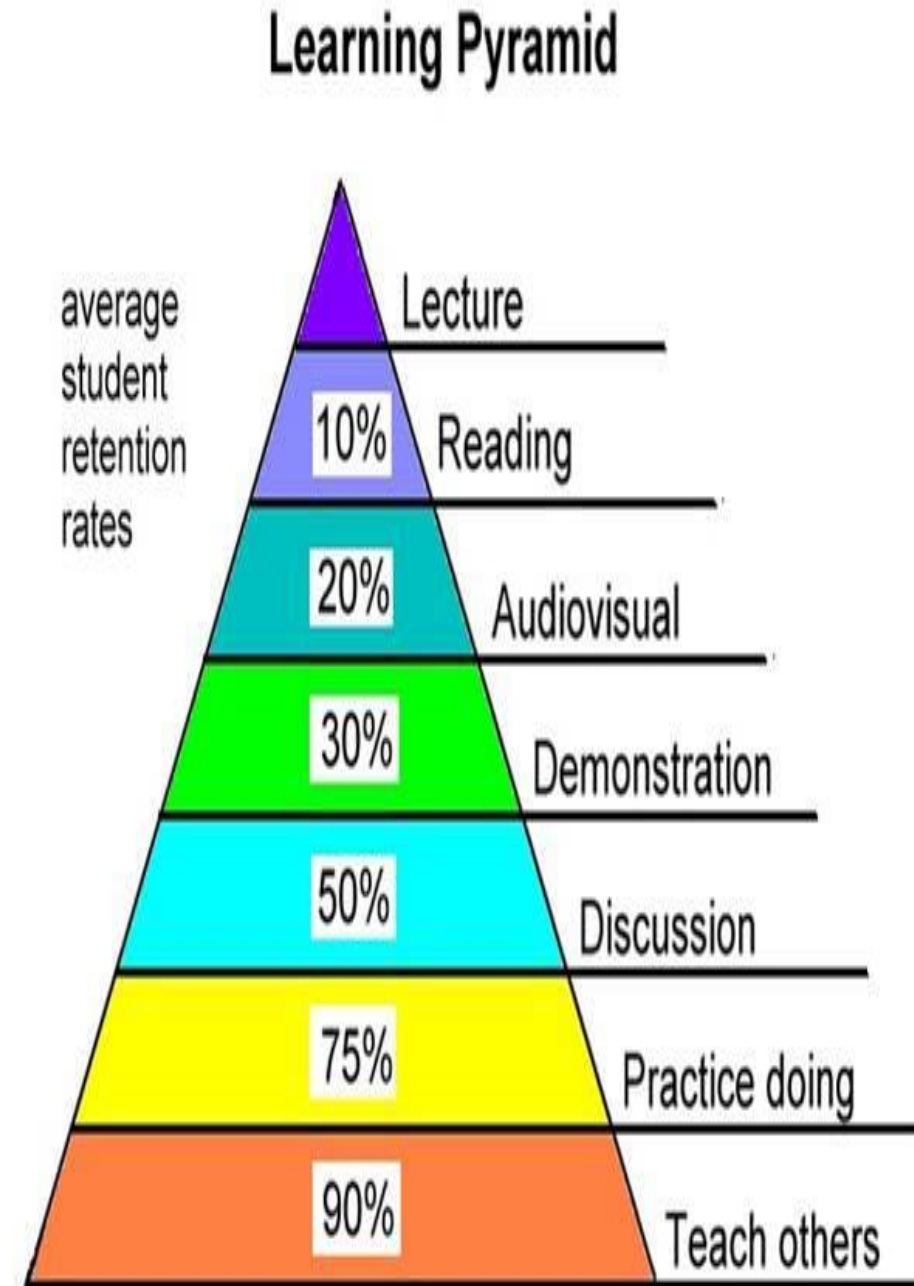
Peer/Self assessment and reflection



Timely and precise *feed-forward*

Higher-order Tasks

- Investigation
- Critical thinking
- Active learning
- Collaborating and sharing
- Problem solving
- Teaching others
- Evaluating and reflecting



Source: National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine

Unleashing Creativity

“Creative skills aren’t just about good ideas, they are about having the skills to make good ideas happen” (Collard).

Rufus Black asserts that creativity flourishes when:

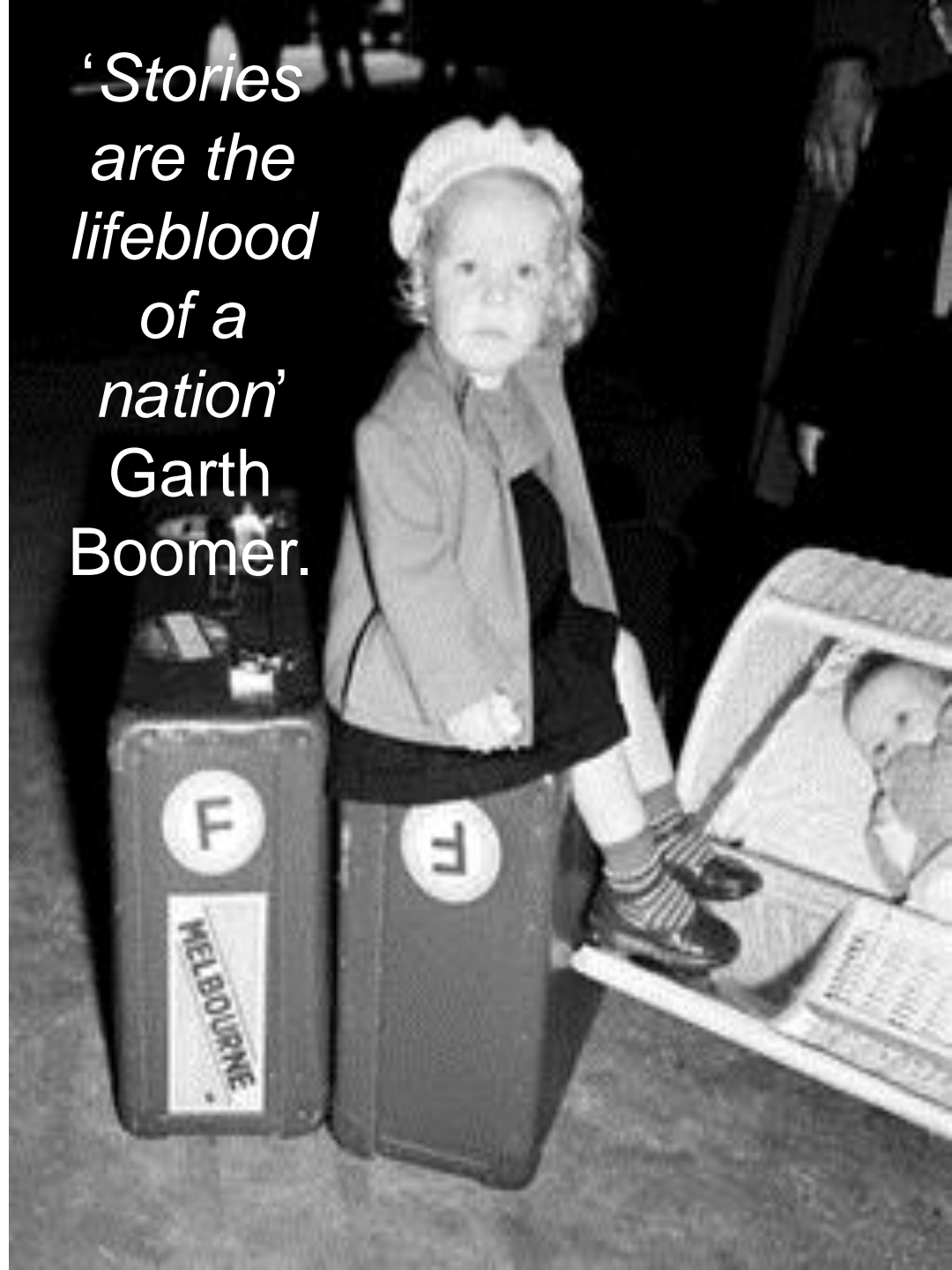
- a specific goal is provided
- there are clear guidelines
- tasks are action oriented
- a task is relevant and time-bound.



Imaginative writing

- A digital timeline:
<http://www.dipity.com/>
- Creative non-fiction
- <http://celtx.com/>
- Choose your own adventure
- Alternative endings or perspectives (*If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, Calvino)
- Google Earth Lit Trip – the story of a composer's life

*'Stories
are the
lifeblood
of a
nation'*
Garth
Boomer.



A wax figure of Leonardo da Vinci, with a long white beard and wearing a purple robe, is shown in profile, painting the Mona Lisa on an easel. The background is a dark purple draped cloth.

Mastery Program

- Student choice based on passion and interest
- Time allocation: One lesson a fortnight, 3 nights each work replacing home-learning
- Mentors
- Presentation and publication

A wax figure of Leonardo da Vinci, with his characteristic long white beard and hair, is shown in profile, focused on painting the Mona Lisa. He is wearing a dark, heavy robe. The painting is on an easel, and he holds a palette and brush. The background is a dark, draped fabric.

Mastery Program

- **Preparation:** Becoming immersed
- **Incubation:** Ideas churn around below the threshold of consciousness - unusual connections are likely to be made
- **Insight:** Pieces of the puzzle fall together and synergy begins to happen
- **Evaluation:** Deciding if the insight valuable and worth pursuing
- **Elaboration:** Validation
- **Publication:** Shared and critiqued by an audience

Peer Assessment

- *“When students are more active participants in the whole process, then feedback is likely to be most useful to students’ learning” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).*
- *“When students get to see other students’ work it deepens understanding of the learning goals” (Nicol, 2008)*



Integrated Tasks

- Making meaningful connections between disciplines through integrated assessment.
- Recognition that new ways of thinking are borne out of deep knowledge and its application across disciplines.
- *‘Education is a process for developing abilities required by life in the 21st century, rather than discrete, departmentalized subject matter’ (2003, Kathy Lake).*



Integrated tasks

- Connected to real world situations
- Prep *Knoxigation*
- Yr. 7 world problems
- Yr. 8 *Minecraft* and sustainability
- Yr. 9 world problem
- Yr. 10 Action learning projects



Year 8 Task

- Develop a low energy, sustainable city using *Minecraft*
- Inter-disciplinary
- Pre and post survey
- Deadlines and challenges
- Teams of three
- Flip Learning model
- City design and a report



Year 10 – Action Research Project

Student Opportunities

As provided to the students:

- Choose a topic you are interested in and even passionate about.
- Become better informed about your topic of interest through inquiry and applying effective research methods.
- Develop a deep understanding of this topic enabling *innovation* THROUGH *investigation*.
- Collect, synthesise, assess and evaluate the information and data collected throughout the investigation.
- Develop the skills to be a confident presenter and communicator.

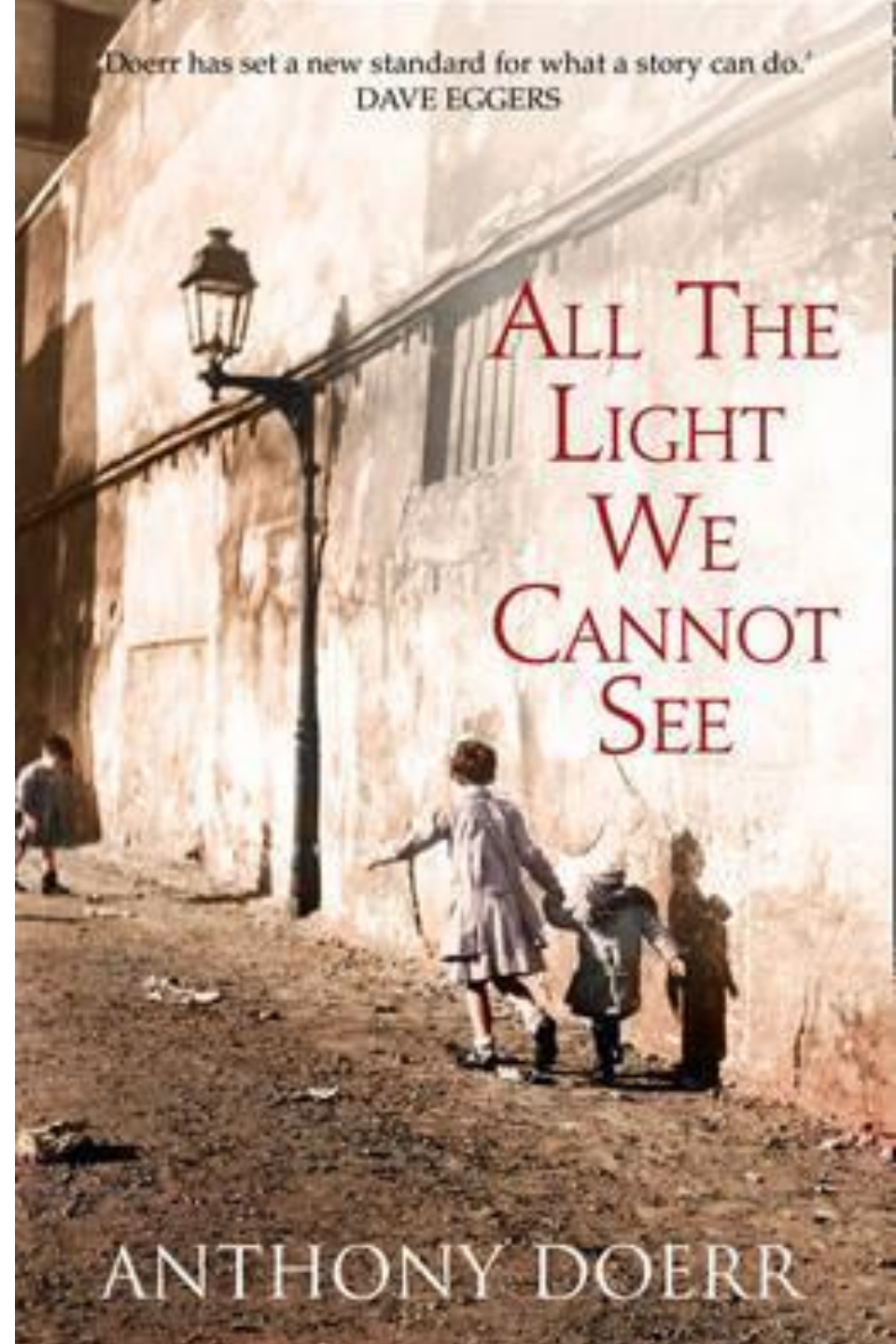


Rich Texts

“The stories I cared about, the stories I read and reread, were usually stories which dared to disturb the universe, which asked questions rather than gave answers” (Madeleine L’Engle, 2015)

Quality texts that feature:

- evocative settings
- authentic characters
- different approaches to form and structure
- rich use of language
- meaningful ideas



Films

- Verbal cinema
- Power of words
- Short of the Week:
<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/>
- The Alchemist's Letter
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXbf0QSiLv4>
- Tropfest films
- CGI award winning animations, such as *Worlds Apart* & *Home Sweet Home*



Poetry

- Ekaphrasis
- Found poems
- Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight'
- John Tranter
- William Blake
- Maya Angelou
- Carol Ann Duffy

Anne Hathaway

by Carol Ann Duffy from *The World's Wife*

'From I gyve unto my wife my second best bed ...'

(from Shakespeare's will)

The bed we loved in was a spinning world
of forests, castles, torchlight, clifftops, seas -
where we would dive for pearls. My lover's words
were shooting stars which fell to earth as kisses
on these lips; my body now a softer rhyme
to his, now echo, assonance; his touch
a verb dancing in the centre of a noun.

Some nights, I dreamed he'd written me, the bed
a page beneath his writer's hands. Romance
and drama played by touch, by scent, by taste.
In the other bed, the best, our guests dozed on,
dribbling their prose. My living laughing love -
I hold him in the casket of my widow's head
as he held me upon that next best bed

Poetry

- Omar Musa:
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= DtscGNZxn4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtscGNZxn4), What will be left of us?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YFSKhqC9rU>
- Sarah Kay, Hiroshima,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXb9N2cVUs4>
- Rick Mayall, The Theatre
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0Ho9T2TcPY>
- Maya Angelou 'And Still I Rise' & 'A Brave and Startling Truth' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ04>
- <http://katetempest.co.uk/video>

Poetry and Art

- <http://www.theartsdesk.com/visual-arts/listed-poems-inspired-paintings?page=0,0>
- <http://natureartandpoetry.blogspot.com.au>
- http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/poetry_and_art/
- [Mona Lisa:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJSp1Wm4-AY&list=PL619885C90AD4C5C7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJSp1Wm4-AY&list=PL619885C90AD4C5C7)

Mourning Picture, Adrienne Rich

They have carried the mahogany chair and the
cane rocker
out under the lilac bush,
and my father and mother darkly sit there, in
black clothes.

Our clapboard house stands fast on its hill,
my doll lies in her wicker pram
gazing at western Massachusetts.

This was our world.

I could remake each shaft of grass
feeling its rasp on my fingers,
draw out the map of every lilac leaf
or the net of veins on my father's
grief-tranced hand.

Out of my head, half-bursting,
still filling, the dream condenses--
shadows, crystals, ceilings, meadows, globes
of dew.

Under the dull green of the lilacs, out in the
light
carving each spoke of the pram, the turned
porch-pillars,
under high early-summer clouds,
I am Effie, visible and invisible,
remembering and remembered.



Student Voice

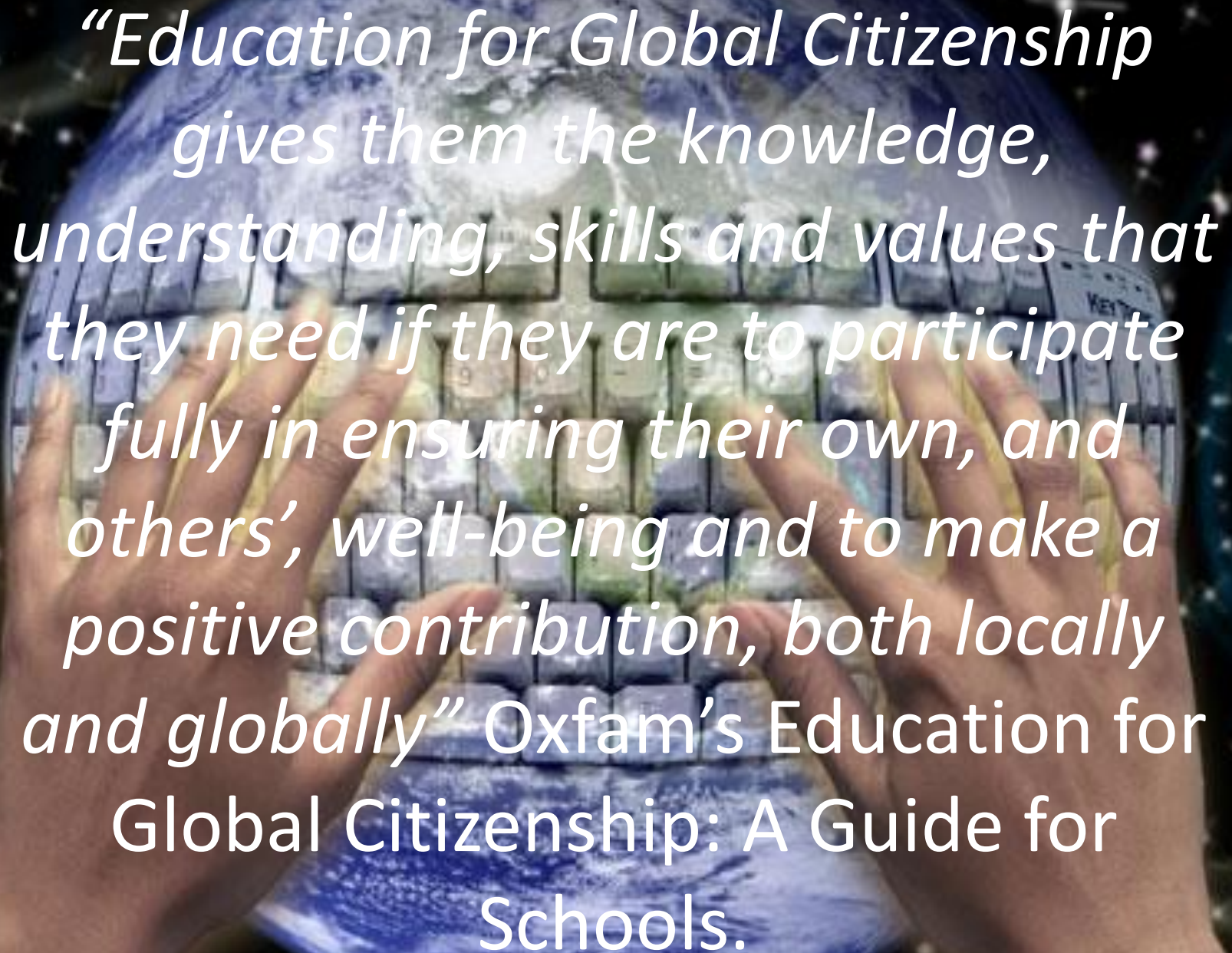
- Student involvement in school and community development.
- Students as researchers and co-enquirers – Action Research Projects.
- Students making significant inputs to teaching and learning, and organisational decision-making.
- Student Future Think Tank





Challenges beyond school





“Education for Global Citizenship gives them the knowledge, understanding, skills and values that they need if they are to participate fully in ensuring their own, and others’, well-being and to make a positive contribution, both locally and globally” Oxfam’s Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools.

Global connections

- Connecting our students globally to students and experts in other places.
- Singh (2010) asserts that culture is an excellent vehicle for inspiring creative thinking and collaborative problem solving.
- When students share ideas and strategies with students from other countries they are encouraged to think divergently and develop innovative approaches.
- Asia Connexions





Global Projects

- <http://www.virtualclassroom.org/index.html> - competition
- <http://www.epals.com/projects/info.aspx?DivID=index> E.g. digital storytelling and global warming
- **Flat Classrooms** - <http://www.flatclassroomproject.org/>
- **iLearn:** <http://media.ilearn.org/home>
- **Global School Net: Cyberfair:** <http://www.globalschoolnet.org/>
- **Skype in the Classroom** <http://education.skype.com/>

<http://unswi>
[ct.wikispace](http://unswi)
[s.com/](http://unswi)